

A NEW MUREX FROM THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT (GASTROPODA: MURICIDAE)

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Pl. 4.

The species to be described was collected by the F.I.S. "Endeavour" on the 2nd April, 1913. Two dead shells were obtained and for some reason they were not mentioned by either of the workers who reported on the "Endeavour" shells (Verco, 1912, and Hedley, 1911, 1914). The shells were discovered in the Australian Museum some time ago when transferring the "Endeavour" collections and they attracted interest at once because of their large size and obvious difference from any known South Australian species.

Study of collections (both at the Australian Museum and the British Museum (Natural History)) failed to reveal any similar specimens and no descriptions or illustrations in literature have been found which can be identified with the "Endeavour" shells. Thus they are regarded as representing a new species, which is described below.

The species most resembles members of the genus *Murexsul* Iredale, which some workers regard as a subgenus of the widespread *Hexaplex* Perry. It is nearest *Murexsul octogonus* (Quoy and Gaimard) from New Zealand, but differs in having fewer varices per whorl, more rounded whorls, relatively greater width, and in its generally larger size. The living South Australian *Murexsul* species (*umbilicatus* (Tenison Woods), *fimbriatus* (Lamarck) and *brazieri* (Angas)) are all much smaller, growing to less than half the length of the new species. No fossil species which can be related to the new species are known, other than *Murexsul suboctogonus* (Ludbrook) which differs, however, in the same way as does *M. octogonus*. Some species of *Hexaplex* s.l. from West Africa (such as *H. varius* Sowerby) are rather similar to the South Australian species and it is also not unlike large specimens of *Basiella stainforthi* (Reeve), from north Western Australia. The latter is quite brightly coloured with a pink aperture and dark varices, while the new species is unicolour brown. *B. stainforthi* also has more numerous varices and a shorter spire.

Murexsul conatus sp. nov.

Description: Shell large for the genus, maximum length 54.5 mm., maximum width (including spines at aperture) 33 mm. Spire elevated, slightly less than half the total length, anterior canal of moderate length, projecting about 13 mm. beyond bottom of aperture. Protoconch pupiform, of three loosely coiled, smooth, rounded whorls. Adult whorls five and a half, discrepant, sculptured with several strong, spiral ridges crossing prominent axial ribs of which there are thirteen on the first post-nuclear whorl. Subsequent whorls with decreasing numbers of ribs, which become differentiated into primary ribs with spines (varices) and secondary ribs without spines situated between the varices. Body whorl with seven varices, and with six secondary ribs, the former continuous from shoulder to anterior canal, the latter short and extending only across the periphery of the whorl. Varices foliated, bearing short, hollow, open spines, the largest at the shoulder whorl (about six mm. long) and three additional large spines at the base, just above the flattened columellar extension bordering the anterior canal. Spiral sculpture well developed on body whorl, with about fifteen unequal granulose ribs, between each of which there are three to five secondary riblets. Aperture rounded, crenulate at the outer margin as a result of the foliations on the outer lip; columellar

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lip well developed as a strong white callus, slightly elevated from the base of the body whorl. Colour white, covered externally with a well developed, creamish brown periostracum.

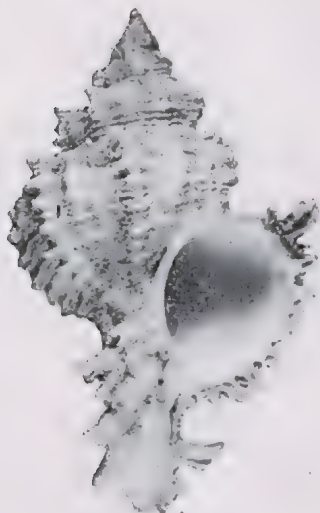
Animal unknown.

Types and Type Locality: The holotype and one paratype are in the Australian Museum, Registered Number C.35592. They were collected between longitudes 126° E. and 129° E. in approximately 100 fathoms, Great Australian Bight, 2nd April, 1913. The position of "Endeavour" on this date was approximately South-West of Eucla, Western Australia.

Remarks: Comparison of the three species, *octogonus*, *conatus*, and *stainforthi*, show an intergradation of characters suggesting that the genera *Murexsul* and *Bassiella* Wenz might well be merged. However, pending a comprehensive revision of the whole generic classification of the Muricidae, the groups are here maintained as distinct genera. The specific name derives from the Latin verb *conatus*, to endeavour, in honour of the many discoveries made by the "Endeavour" during her brief working life.

REFERENCES

- HEDLEY, C., 1911. Report on the Mollusca obtained by the F.I.S. "Endeavour" chiefly off Cape Wiles, South Australia. Part 1. *Zool. Res. Fish. Exp. "Endeavour"*, 1: 89-114, pls. 17-20.
- HEDLEY, C., 1914. Mollusca from the Great Australian Bight. *Zool. Res. Fish. Exp. "Endeavour"*, 2: 63-74, pls. 8-12.
- VERCO, J. C., 1912. Shells from the Great Australian Bight. *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Aust.*, 36: 206-232, pls. 10-14, 16.



Pl. 4. *Murexsul conatus* sp. nov.

Holotype. AM. C.35592. 100 fms..

Great Australian Bight,

South Australia.

Approx. nat. size.